

be viewed as of a justifiable type—at least criticism of the same general nature has been leveled at the Court by Jackson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt. In denouncing Judge Gary, Altgeld was on more tender ground.\* To announce to the world that the trial court had deliberately erred in convicting the anarchists after four of them had been hung for the crime, seemed a terrific blow at the whole judicial system. A mercy pardon would have given the men their freedom. Altgeld chose to base his pardon on the errors in the trial because to him that was the only "right" thing to do—if the men had been wrongfully convicted then they should be set free on that ground, and on that ground alone. The storm of abuse which crashed around his ears may well be kept in mind when we recall that since his time Sacco and Vanzetti have died and Mooney is still in the penitentiary.

One of the most interesting things about this book is the proof which the author introduces to show that Altgeld was not broken by the opposition his acts incurred. Using free silver as his weapon, Altgeld snatched control of the Democratic party from Cleveland and was the commanding figure in the 1896 convention of that party. The Democratic platform, of which he was largely the author, stated a much broader basis for the campaign than the issue of free silver. Altgeld tried to keep the campaign on that broader basis—to make the election a reflection of public opinion on such issues as government by injunction, violence in labor relations, and the income tax. Whether a different result would have followed had Altgeld been successful must remain one of the unanswerable "ifs" of history.

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**DIVIDED WE STAND: THE CRISIS OF A FRONTIERLESS DEMOCRACY**, by Walter Prescott Webb.<sup>1</sup> New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1937. Pp. vii, 239. \$2.50.

Anybody concerned with potent political symbols in the United States will read Webb's new book with more than passive attention. This professor of American history at the University of

Texas gives the anti-monopoly struggle a new twist. Most recent books set finance capital over against the rest of the community. This book sets the South and West against the monopoly power of the North. These are geographical symbols, not functional symbols. Such sectional symbols have played a disastrous role in the past of the American nation. Will Webb's attempt to revive them point toward the ultimate breakup of this nation, or, as he intends, put more punch behind the demand to democratize monopoly in the nation as it stands at present?

The answer to this question depends in part on the propaganda skill with which the book is constructed. It is addressed to a much wider public than fellow-historians. Paragraphs are short, footnotes are sparse, diagrams are frequent, phrases are simple and homely.

Webb says that American historians have been so struck by the aptness of Turner's interpretation of history in terms of the "frontier" that they have been slow to discover how to interpret history now that the frontier has closed. Webb would substitute "the growing corporation" as the dominating factor in recent American life.

Webb is chiefly interested in the regional significance of the corporation. It is said to be the chain which enables the North to rule the South and West in a material way after absolute political domination has passed away. The North broke the military power of the South in the war between the states. The North exercised political control of the South until the election of 1876. The political control of the West by the North lasted longer. It ceased by 1912 when the last territories were admitted as states.

The concentration of economic control in the North is depicted in terse diagrams which depict the localization of big corporations, of firms selling merchandise to retail merchants, life insurance companies, life insurance premiums and disbursements, demand and time deposits, American Sugar Refining stock ownership, and income tax returns.

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I doubt if some of the symbols invoked by Webb are adroitly chosen. The title is not arresting. The allusion to Lincoln is too remote. Webb relies on the term "feudal" to stigmatize corporation control. But "feudal" is an empty classroom word that has no punch in the lives of everyday Americans. The word itself is linguistically deficient for propaganda purposes: one needs the hammer quality of the "k" sound in "capital," or the explosive hiss

of "boss." "Feudal" is too weak for a devil word. "System" (another hiss word thanks to the "s") did serve Hitler and would be acceptable here, but Webb does not use it. The last chapter of Webb's book has no action words that point anywhere in particular. Hence it is defective in prescription as in diagnosis.

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